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MEMORANDUM FOR: All NIOs
NIC/AG

9 Oct 86

I believe most NIOs will find this fascinating reading--an outsider's view of our estimative process. Even though this is limited primarily to strategic weapons issues, it has significance for the work of almost all of us and is worth reading.

G.E.F.
VC/NIC

Attachment: "Team B, The Reality Behind the Myth," Commentary

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Commentary

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Team B
The Reality Behind the Myth

Richard Pipes

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Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth

Richard Pipes

FOUR years ago, the Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, in answer to a question whether the United States expected to emerge victorious from a nuclear war, responded that anyone in his position who did not prepare to prevail in a war deserved to be impeached. This statement did not attract a great deal of attention, for it seemed obvious, although in fact it repudiated the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) that had dominated U.S. policy since the late 1950's. To understand this evolution in American strategic thinking it is worthwhile recalling the episode of "Team B" which occurred ten years ago as a result of the decision of the-then Director of Central Intelligence, George Bush, to commission alternative assessments of the Soviet strategic threat.

When the United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan, the military effect of these new weapons escaped no one, but their impact on future strategy was only dimly understood and a subject of controversy. The consensus of the scientific community, which had designed the new weapons, held that by virtue of their unprecedented destructiveness as well as their imperviousness to defenses, they had fundamentally and permanently altered the nature of warfare. Once other countries had acquired the ability to manufacture similar weapons—and the scientists correctly predicted that this was bound to occur before long—they would become unusable. With more than one power disposing of nuclear weapons, they could not be employed with impunity, as they had been by the U.S. against Japan: hence they would have only one conceivable function and that would be to deter others. Since victory in nuclear war was out of the question, nuclear weapons could not be rationally put to offensive purposes.

This outlook, championed in the pages of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* and, later, *Scientific American*, did not gain immediate ascendancy. Presidents Truman and Eisenhower, confronting Communist aggression in Europe and Asia and unable—because of fiscal restraints—to stop Soviet expansion with conventional forces, had no choice but to rely on the threat of nuclear response. That this threat could be effectively used, Eisenhower demonstrated in 1953 when he compelled the North Koreans to accept an armistice. Later he and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, coined the slogan of "massive retaliation" with which they hoped to contain the Soviet Union and its clients at minimum cost and without resort to the unpopular military draft.

Such nuclear blackmail, of course, was possible only as long as the United States retained a monopoly on the manufacture of nuclear weapons and the vehicles (bombers) able to deliver them to other continents. This monopoly eroded faster than expected. The Soviet explosion of a fission bomb in 1949 and fusion (hydrogen) bomb four years later shocked the United States, but it did not yet force it to abandon the strategy of "massive retaliation" because the Russians lacked adequate means of delivering these explosive devices against the United States. These means they acquired in 1957 when Sputnik demonstrated their ability to launch intercontinental missiles. Since there existed at the time no effective means of intercepting such missiles, certain to be armed with nuclear charges, the United States faced, for the first time in its history, a direct threat to its national survival.

This prospect traumatized President Eisenhower, forcing him radically to alter U.S. strategic doctrine. Unable to resort to the threat of nuclear annihilation to contain the Soviet Union, he decided henceforth to seek security through accords with Moscow. Such a course had been urged by many leading scientists. Within weeks after Moscow had sent Sputnik into space, Eisenhower moved the Science Advisory Committee chaired by the provost of MIT, James Killian, to the White House to give him guidance in these matters. This step marked a break in the U.S. defense planning because it involved, for the first time, civilian experts in the formulation of military strategy. Henceforth the scientific community, working through the Advisory Committee as well as other channels, acquired a dominant voice in

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the formulation of U.S. nuclear strategy. The scientists used this voice to lead U.S. strategy away from traditional ways of military thinking and toward arms-control negotiations. They were to retain this voice for nearly a quarter of a century, until the advent of the Reagan administration.

II

THE growing influence of scientific modes of thinking on all aspects of life is probably the most outstanding feature of modern Western culture. It began in the 16th century with the revolution in astronomy and then spread into other realms of thought, including the humanities and social studies. Properly speaking, science is not content but method—a strictly empirical way of dealing with phenomena which assumes that whatever cannot be observed and measured does not exist.

Applied to human affairs, this method has produced the "science of man" or sociology. Conceived in France in the early years of the 19th century, sociology and its theoretical underpinning, positivism, deprecate national culture and history as factors that shape human behavior in favor of abstract conceptions of man, isolated from time and space. In the words of Leszek Kolakowski:

> Contemporary positivism is an attempt to overcome historicism once and for all . . . it . . . frees us from the need to study history, which—since any philosophy worthy of the name must be cumulative in character—must appear to those professing this doctrine as a succession of barren, futile efforts, basically unintelligible as to results, and only very occasionally illuminated by a ray of common sense.

Scientists are by schooling and experience committed positivists. They are impatient with everything that they regard as "irrational," that is, outside the reach of scientific observation. F.A. Hayek has explained well the *déformation professionelle* of the scientist when confronted with the messy world of living human beings:

> What men know or think about the external world or about themselves, their concepts and even the subjective qualities of their sense perception are to Science never ultimate reality, data to be accepted. Its concern is not what men think about the world and how they consequently behave, but what they ought to think.

When they run into what they regard as "irrational" ideas or forms of behavior, scientists turn into educators who instruct wayward mortals what to think. It is psychologically as well as intellectually impossible for most of them, and especially for the most gifted, to accept the irrational as real. So persuaded are many scientists of the incontrovertible and universal validity of their method that in their public capacity they readily succumb to a fanaticism that is quite impervious to both argument and experience. They are no more prepared to take seriously the proposition that nuclear weapons might be effective instruments of warfare than to waste time proving that the earth is not flat.

Of course, there is no iron necessity that a scientifically trained person must think and act in this manner: Andrei Sakharov and Edward Teller are proof that great scientists can entertain a variety of points of view on human affairs. But it takes a great deal of civic courage to stand up to a consensus of one's peers, especially if it is reinforced with political influence and access to funding. Experience shows that most people will more readily face enemy bullets than what Samuel Johnson called the hiss of the world.

HAVING been brought into the process of decision-making and given political influence never before enjoyed by members of their profession, American scientists quickly formulated a body of opinion that brooked no opposition. Alternative views were silenced, their advocates ostracized. The scientists were divided among themselves on certain issues but they were united in the belief that the only rational function of nuclear weapons was to deter.

One group, which soon came to dominate the debate, called for deterrence through agreement. Its advocates, among whom Hans Bethe was one of the most visible, believed that nuclear weapons were so destructive that they could deter at a low level. Instead of building more weapons of this kind (especially the hydrogen bomb, which they opposed), the U.S. should intensify efforts to reach arms-control agreements with the Soviet Union. A second group, led by Edward Teller, advocated deterrence through strength. It wanted to neutralize the Soviet threat with still more potent and accurate bombs on the ground that in a world of sovereign states international accords provided inadequate guarantees of national security. The first group urged avoiding an arms race with Moscow in favor of "educating" the Russians to its futility and striving, through bilateral agreements and even, if need be, unilateral concessions, for mutual reductions. The second group wanted, if necessary, to match and surpass the Soviet effort. How intolerant scientists can be when vested with political power they demonstrated in 1957 by excluding Teller and all who thought like him from the influential Science Advisory Board. In this way, through exclusion, they achieved a consensus that allowed them to offer Presidents advice with singular authority.

The strategic policy imposed by scientists and adopted by the U.S. government in the 1960's may be summarized as follows: the only scientifically sound strategy is Mutual Assured Destruction. This means that once both superpowers have acquired a certain level of retaliatory power, should

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either of them dare to attack the other, it would be struck with so devastating a blow that it would suffer as much as its victim. As defined by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, MAD demanded that the United States, after absorbing a Soviet surprise first strike, be capable of responding with a retaliatory strike that would wipe out between one-fifth and one-third of the Soviet Union's population and between one-half and three-quarters of its industrial capacity. Anything beyond this arbitrarily established standard of "unacceptable damage" was redundant and "destabilizing." McNamara decided that a force of 1,000 ICBM's, 41 submarines, and 600 bombers would ensure the U.S. of the ability to inflict such damage on the Soviet Union even under the "worst-case" scenario.

This strategy regarded defenses of any sort as unsettling the balance because they raised the prospect that either country, using them as a shield, could launch a preemptive strike with relative impunity. For MAD to work, both sides had to be vulnerable to destruction. One of the earliest advocates of this doctrine, Arnold Wolfers, formulated what must surely be the most bizarre doctrine in the history of military thought when he argued that for the United States to feel secure from the Soviet Union it had to make certain that the Soviet Union possessed the ability totally to destroy it.

The public at large was not initiated into the complexities of Mutual Assured Destruction. It was told simply that there was "overkill," that nuclear build-ups beyond the figures set by McNamara constituted "madness," and that henceforth security lay not in unilaterally arming but in mutually disarming. These propositions became dogma.

Since scientists tend to endow people, as they do inanimate objects, with an innate logic, they entertained no doubt that nuclear weapons could have but one "rational" use. The Soviet Union could no more produce a Communist nuclear strategy than a Communist science of physics. This reasoning led to the inescapable conclusion that the Soviet Union had either already adopted MAD or would do so in time, in deference to the immutable laws of nuclear reality. That the USSR was indeed moving in this direction, the scientists had an opportunity to persuade themselves in the course of arms-control negotiations, in which they played an important role, as well as from contacts with Soviet scientists at various private conferences which proliferated in the 1960's. Totally ignorant of Communist politics and not particularly interested in them, these scientists turned strategists and diplomats allowed themselves to be persuaded by their Soviet counterparts that the latter enjoyed the same influence in Moscow that they themselves had in Washington, and were also working to restrain their own "hawks" and their own "military-industrial complex."

Thus it happened that for two-and-one-half decades arms control rather than arms build-up became the centerpiece of U.S. defense policy: a situation without historic precedent and testimony to the success of American scientists in persuading the country that the atomic bomb had completely altered the conduct of international affairs, creating an environment in which, as in Alice's Looking Glass world, everything was topsy-turvy.

THE scientists in charge of U.S. strategy, confirming Hayek's observation, blandly ignored that human affairs are subject to different rules and that in a century-and-a-half of strenuous efforts sociologists have failed to come up with universal laws of human conduct remotely resembling those of the exact sciences. They seem to have been unaware of the distinction between the value-free ("objective") natural sciences and the value-determined ("subjective") social sciences which philosophers like Heinrich Rickert and Nicholas Mikhailovsky had demonstrated already in the 19th century. Their ignorance of history blinded them even to the possibility that the Soviet leadership, steeped as it was in a radically different political culture and pursuing different objectives, could also view nuclear weapons differently.

The Soviet *nomenklatura* (the ruling elite of the Communist party), very experienced in taking advantage of the weaknesses of its victims, brilliantly exploited the political innocence of American scientists (as well as the vanity which is perhaps the most vulnerable trait of intellectuals) to persuade them of a spurious identity of views and interests between East and West. At Pugwash, Dartmouth, and countless other formal and informal meetings held now in the U.S. and now in the Soviet Union, they told the Americans just what the Americans wanted to hear: that MAD was indeed the only strategic doctrine that made sense, that parity was all their country wanted, and that arms control, not arms build-up, was the way to assure both national and international security. The time had come for scientists of all countries to take power away from politicians and generals.

When more skeptical American scientists raised awkward questions, their Soviet counterparts had ready answers. The Soviet civil- and military-defense effort? That was against China, of course. Continuing quantitative and qualitative improvements in Soviet missiles? The Russian tradition, shaped by centuries of foreign invasions, calls for overinsurance. The refusal to furnish figures on the Soviet nuclear arsenal or to allow on-site inspection? Unfortunately, Russians have always been a secretive nation. By pretending (in private only) to hold their people and some of its leaders in low esteem, they created an atmosphere of make-believe mutual trust that dissolved such misgivings as American scientists might still have had.

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Had U.S. scientists not relied so much on private confidences but taken the trouble to read Soviet military literature and to look, without preconceptions, at ongoing Soviet strategic programs, they would have had to realize that something was terribly wrong with their assumptions. Soviet military publications, which are subject to the most rigid censorship imaginable and therefore always speak with an official voice, made no secret of the fact that Moscow had decided nuclear weapons could be used not only to deter but also to overpower. From the early 1960's on, Soviet strategists argued that nuclear weapons were the decisive weapons of modern warfare and the key to victory, for which reason the Strategic Rocket Forces had become the mainstay of Soviet armed might.

Had Soviet strategists done nothing more than assert this thesis, one could have dimissed such talk as pap for the generals. But they also provided a rationale. They argued that nuclear charges and intercontinental missiles had revolutionized warfare by making it possible to launch preemptive strikes, which, in contrast to conventional war, allowed a country to gain a strategic decision at once rather than slowly, from a patient accumulation of tactical victories. When speaking to each other in the pages of Soviet military journals, Soviet experts simply ignored the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction which Soviet disinformation agents were ladling out at their convivial encounters to science professors from Harvard, MIT, and Stanford. Nor did Soviet experts pay more than marginal attention to arms control, so central to U.S. strategic thinking. Soviet professional literature, such as the journal *Voennaia mysl'* (*Military Thought*), concerned itself exclusively with the question that has stood at the center of military thinking since the dawn of history: how to win wars.

It is especially baffling that American strategic amateurs ignored even the warnings of Andrei Sakharov, a fellow scientist and a member of the Soviet defense establishment, whose moral integrity and expertise were beyond question. In 1975, this creator of the Soviet hydrogen bomb stated in a book published in English in the United States, as if it were a self-evident truth, that the introduction of missiles with multiple and independent warheads (MIRV's) would make it attractive for a potential aggressor to attack:

> The fact that the Vladivostok agreement seemed to legitimize multiple, independently targetable warheads is . . . alarming. . . . Put quite simply, it would become *strategically advantageous, and relatively safe*, for either side to deliver a preemptive strike with nuclear missiles.*

And if such "soft" evidence did not convince, then the "hard" data on Soviet deployments should have provided food for thought. When McNamara served as Secretary of Defense, the U.S., accepting his notion of what was required to inflict "unacceptable damage," unilaterally froze its strategic arsenal. By this restraint it enabled the Soviet Union to catch up and thereby create the "stability" posited by MAD. The only subsequent upgrading of U.S. strategic forces was the introduction of MIRV's intended to give the U.S. retaliatory force the ability to respond effectively after much of it had been lost to a Soviet first strike.

The Soviet Union took advantage of this restraint to gain strategic parity by 1969. Then, instead of freezing its arsenal as well, it merrily proceeded to deploy a fourth generation of MIRVed missiles with throwweights and accuracies that could have no other conceivable mission than the elimination of the U.S. deterrent in time of war. Concurrently, it carried out an ambitious program of strategic defenses which had no counterpart on the U.S. side: air defense, anti-satellite systems, civil defense, and an anti-ballistic-missile defense system around its capital city. These measures alone should have alerted the American scientific community that the Soviet Union did not subscribe to MAD, since they contradicted its fundamental principle that each country had to remain a willing hostage to the other.

But all the evidence which did not accord with the hallowed MAD doctrine was ignored. The American scientific community, soon joined by bevies of political scientists, economists, philosophers, and even lawyers, physicians, and psychiatrists, came to regard strategy not as a theory of conflict but as an intellectual game. And since in intellectual circles the highest honors go to individuals who produce the most innovative ideas, whatever their relationship to reality, if any, the greatest fame and influence went to those who formulated the most original and elegant ideas. Soviet views were ignored precisely because they fell far short of these standards.

And indeed, the strategic theories formulated by American natural and social scientists were entirely fresh: they demonstrated how wrong it is to say that there are no new ideas under the sun. Among these were such propositions as "the task of the military is not to win wars but to prevent them," "offense good, defense bad," and "killing cities is right, killing missiles is wrong." All such propositions would qualify for what Ivan Turgenev used to call "reverse commonplaces."

III

THE task of collecting and analyzing data on Soviet strategic deployments falls on the U.S. intelligence community, headed by the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), who also serves as Director of the Central Intelligence

* *My Country and the World* (Knopf, 1975), p. 71, emphasis added.

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Agency (CIA). It consists of a number of bureaus of which the most important are the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA). In producing its estimates, the intelligence community relies almost exclusively on satellite and electronic surveillance because the Soviet Union has consistently refused not only to allow on-site inspection but even to provide comprehensive figures on its nuclear arsenal.

Possibly the single most important product of the intelligence community is the National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet Strategic Objectives, known as NIE 11-3/8. Prepared annually, toward the end of the year, in time for the new defense budget, it is released to a select body of officials who have the "need to know." This NIE summarizes the information available on Soviet strategic capabilities, projects them into the future, and assesses their probable missions. The personnel assigned the task of drafting this document under the National Intelligence Officer for the Soviet Union are to ignore U.S. capabilities and avoid balance-of-power estimates ("net assessments"). The function of NIE 11-3/8 is simply to inform the decision-maker: as best as we can determine, the Soviet Union is developing such and such strategic capabilities; it is up to you to decide what these developments portend for U.S. security and how to respond to them.

Although the bulk of such data is gathered by mechanical devices that are free of value judgments, they must be interpreted by human beings who are never without them. In practice it is not possible completely to divorce an assessment of capabilities from the judgment of intention: the significance of a person's purchasing a knife is different if he is a professional chef or the leader of a street gang, although the technical "capability" which the knife provides is the same in each case. In one way or another, more often unconsciously than not, the analyst who studies Soviet nuclear capabilities injects into his analysis subjective opinions as to their purpose, which, in turn, derive from his view of why the Soviet Union builds a nuclear arsenal in the first place. Even the most technical assessment of "capabilities," therefore, entails some view of the motives of the opposite party.

Now he who speculates on the motives of others can proceed in one of two ways. He can ask himself: (1) given what I know of these people, what can be on their mind?; or (2) if I were in their shoes, why would I do what I observe them doing? Clearly, the first of these approaches is preferable. It is also the more difficult because it requires knowledge of alien cultures and psychologies, not to speak of an effort of the imagination. If we add to this difficulty the fact that the scientists and engineers entrusted with responsibility for preparing these estimates tend to belittle the influence of cultural factors on human behavior, it is hardly surprising that the U.S. intelligence community, in assessing Soviet strategic programs, has relied heavily on the second approach, popularly known as "mirror-imaging." This practice attributes to others one's own motives and intentions on the unspoken assumption that these alone are "normal" or "rational." "Mirror-imaging" is the very antithesis of the scientific method which seeks to eliminate personal and subjective factors from the process of observation and analysis. Yet, paradoxically, it is precisely how scientists are likely to proceed once they leave the realm of the exact sciences.

A NATION's intelligence community reflects the habits of thought of its educated elite from whose ranks it is recruited and on whom it depends for intellectual sustenance. The CIA is no exception. Its analytic staff, filled with American Ph.D.'s in the natural and social sciences along with engineers, inevitably shares the outlook of U.S. academe, with its penchant for philosophical positivism, cultural agnosticism, and political liberalism. The special knowledge which it derives from classified sources is mainly technical; the rest of its knowledge, as well as the intellectual equipment which it brings to bear on the evidence, comes from academia.

In the 1970's, collating and analyzing the evidence on Soviet strategic programs, the U.S. intelligence community (with some exceptions, notably the DIA) tended to reason in terms of conventional wisdom. It took for granted the universal validity of MAD and interpreted the data on Soviet strategic programs to mean that whatever the USSR constructed had to serve deterrent purposes exclusively. It ignored Soviet pronouncements to the contrary, partly because they appeared scientifically absurd, partly because it felt uncomfortable with "soft" data. On these grounds, it implicitly minimized the Soviet strategic threat.

The intellectual predispositions which led to such conclusions were reinforced by political pressures from the Nixon White House. Having staked their political careers on détente, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger disliked intelligence estimates that stressed the Soviet threat to the United States and showed the USSR moving beyond deterrence. Persons who at the time worked in the intelligence community assert that in 1969-70 the White House began to intervene in the estimating process. It did so not by demanding that the estimates come up with politically acceptable conclusions, but that they concentrate exclusively on the technical data or hardware, avoiding what Kissinger called "talmudic" estimates. This had the same effect because by eliminating informed, conscious, and overt political judgment from the estimates, it led to the injection of surreptitious political judgments disguised as hardware analyses.

Thus, paradoxically, as satellite surveillance enhanced the ability of the U.S. to monitor Soviet

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nuclear deployments, its ability to interpret them declined. The intelligence community expressed no alarm at the unanticipated build-up of Soviet strategic capabilities in the 1970's, the decade when the United States virtually froze its nuclear arsenal in the expectation that Moscow would do likewise. The fact that in the 1970's the USSR deployed eleven new strategic systems as against one deployed by the U.S. was brushed aside with arguments that made sense only in terms of the MAD doctrine.

Some individuals in and out of government, however, grew uneasy about the assurances issued by the CIA and began to urge an independent review of its data base to determine whether a second reading of the evidence would not yield different results.

OVERSEEING the performance of the intelligence community on behalf of the Executive is the responsibility of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), composed of prominent business executives and other public figures, engineers, and scientists. The group meets several times a year to review intelligence reports, raise questions, serve as devil's advocate, and make recommendations to the President and the Director of Central Intelligence. In the summer of 1976, PFIAB had fourteen members. Four of them were chief executive officers of high-technology corporations: William O. Baker of Bell Telephone Laboratories, John S. Foster, Jr. of TRW, Robert W. Galvin of Motorola, and Edwin H. Land of Polaroid. Two—Admiral George W. Anderson, former Chief of Naval Operations, and General Lyman L. Lemnitzer—were professional soldiers. Edward Teller was the sole scientist. The remaining seven figured prominently in public life: John B. Connally (former Governor of Texas), Gordon Gray (one-time Secretary of the Army), Clare Booth Luce (the writer and former Ambassador to Rome), Robert D. Murphy (a retired diplomat), George P. Shultz (then ex-Secretary of the Treasury), and Edward Bennett Williams (a well-known Washington attorney). Leo Cherne, an economist and director of Freedom House, chaired the group. The composition of PFIAB was weighted in favor of realists who viewed with varying degrees of skepticism the doctrines of soft-line scientists and professional arms controllers.

Early in 1975 PFIAB began to feel uneasy over the performance of the CIA in estimating the trend of Soviet strategic forces. Several factors contributed to this anxiety. In 1974, Albert Wohlstetter, a leading specialist on nuclear weapons, had published evidence to show that although the public, remembering the "missile-gap" fiasco, considered the intelligence community guilty of exaggerating the Soviet nuclear threat, in fact it had persistently underestimated it. It so happened that at about the same time, on the basis of fresh data, the CIA upgraded its estimate of Soviet defense expenditures from 6-8 percent of GNP (which was only slightly higher than the American figure) to 11-13 percent. This radically revised estimate not only made the Soviet threat loom much greater, but cast fresh doubts on the quality of intelligence assessments. Quite independently, John Collins of the Congressional Research Service, on the basis of open sources, published in January 1976 a study of the Soviet military effort which painted a much grimmer picture than that proffered by intelligence: an updated edition, completed later that year, proved so disturbing and so much at odds with the government's policy that the study's sponsor, the Senate Armed Services Committee, saw fit to suppress it.

Reports of such contrary opinions worried PFIAB, which approached President Nixon at the beginning of 1975 with the suggestion that he appoint an independent body of experts to look into the intelligence data. Nixon showed no interest in this suggestion, the more so since William Colby, his Director of Central Intelligence, strongly objected to outsiders "second-guessing" the staff of his agency.

When Gerald Ford replaced Nixon as President, PFIAB restated its concerns. In August 1975, its chairman, Admiral Anderson, proposed a "competitive analysis," to be carried out under the direction of the White House through its National Security Council, that would pit a team of outside experts against the CIA, to determine whether the two groups, using the same data, would or would not reach the same assessment of the Soviet strategic threat. Ford liked the idea but Colby remained adamantly opposed. To appease the critics, Colby now proposed to conduct an in-house review of the Agency's "track record" in regard to the three most controversial aspects of the Soviet strategic effort: air defense, missile accuracy, and strategic objectives. For this project, he selected active and recently retired personnel of the CIA. According to Lionel Olmer, who was PFIAB's executive secretary at the time:

> The CIA produced a "track record" study about 75 pages long. It was so astonishing that Bush (Colby was gone by then) had absolutely no option but to accept the A-B Team proposal. The study was so condemnatory of the performance of the community over a period of ten years on those three issues that it left no room for argument that something ought to be done.*

In late 1975 George Bush took over a battered and demoralized CIA: he was so troubled by its condition that soon after assuming office he commissioned the consulting firm Arthur D. Little to look into its problems. Bush was much more

* "Watchdogging Intelligence," in *Seminar on Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence* (Incidental paper, Center for Information Policy Research, Harvard University, 1980), pp. 179-80.

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receptive to PFIAB's proposal, and in June 1976 agreed with its new chairman, the ebullient Leo Cherne, to carry out an experiment in "competitive analysis," but under his own auspices rather than those of the National Security Adviser. Three outside teams were to be selected to look into Soviet air defenses, missile accuracies, and strategic objectives. The CIA's group, charged with drafting the current (1977) NIE 11-3/8 would be known as "A Team." "B Teams" would consist of independent outside experts: they were to work with the same raw data that the Agency supplied to its A Team. The analyses were to be completed by November 1976, in time to permit revisions in the forthcoming NIE, due in December, if such were deemed necessary. The experiment required complete secrecy in order to prevent the leakage of sensitive intelligence material and to keep the findings from being exploited for partisan political purposes.

The rules having been agreed upon, the CIA (rather than PFIAB, as is often erroneously asserted) began the search for outside experts to man the three B teams. It encountered little difficulty in staffing the groups investigating missile accuracies and air defenses, for their tasks were narrowly technical. Staffing Team B on Soviet strategic objectives proved more difficult because its task called not only for technical expertise but also for political judgment. As I was to learn later, the Agency approached unsuccessfully two individuals to chair this team. One, on active government service, was refused leave by his superior, Secretary of State Kissinger, to take on the assignment. The other declined for personal reasons. On the recommendation of his National Intelligence Office staff, and in agreement with William Hyland of the National Security Council, Bush then selected me for the post.*

MY WIFE and I were spending the summer of 1976 in London where I was working in the British Museum Library on the Russian Civil War. I knew, of course, nothing of the negotiations between PFIAB and the CIA over competitive analyses of National Intelligence Estimates. By profession and preference a historian, I had had only limited political experience, owing mainly to the interest which Senator Henry Jackson and his assistant, Dorothy Fosdick, had shown in my criticism of détente. In 1973, Richard B. Foster, head of the Strategic Studies Center in Washington, a branch of the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), had invited me to join his Center as a consultant, in which capacity I directed several studies of Soviet foreign policy. Even so, I was in no sense a member of the establishment of defense experts; since the purpose of Team B was to take a fresh look at the Soviet nuclear effort, however, my being an outsider, without a vested interest in the consensus, was an advantage.

In mid-July 1976 Foster called me in London to say that I had been offered, through SRI, an interesting and important assignment connected with Soviet strategy. Since I intended to return to the United States soon, we agreed that he would give me the details when we next met in Washington.

I returned home on July 22, and the following day saw Foster as well as a representative of the CIA, John Paisley, who outlined to me the purpose and scope of the undertaking. I then spoke with E. Henry Knoche, the Agency's Deputy Director, and Howard Stoertz, the National Intelligence Officer responsible for drafting NIE 11-3/8, whose counterpart I was to become. To these officials I posed the principal questions on my mind. Our mandate: how far-reaching an inquiry did they envisage? I also wanted to know whether we were expected to act as a panel of judges, adjudicating between contending points of view, or advocates of an alternative point of view to that found in the official estimates. The answer I received to the first question sounded vague, from which I concluded that the team I was being asked to chair could cast its nets as widely and deeply as it thought necessary. In view of the complaints repeatedly voiced later that our team had "exceeded its mandate," it needs to be stressed that all the officials to whom I spoke before and after accepting the assignment left it up to us to determine what we needed to do to answer the question: what are Soviet strategic objectives? The response to the second question was: make as strong a case as you can if you disagree with the official estimate.

The task looked challenging and important. If, nevertheless, I hesitated at first to take it on, it was because of fear that I lacked the necessary expertise in the scientific and engineering issues involved in the designing, testing, deploying, and targeting of nuclear missiles. Foster dispelled these doubts by arguing that the whole subject had too long been analyzed in narrowly technical terms, as if the strategic competition involved impersonal weapons systems rather than the human beings who controlled them. As for the technical expertise, this could be assured by appointing to the group professional missile specialists.

Inasmuch as the work required access to highly classified sources, I had to undergo a series of intensive security clearances that included an encounter with the polygraph. These and other preliminaries were completed by the middle of August, at which time I began work. The Agency assigned to me as liaison John Paisley. Paisley had retired two years earlier as Deputy Director of the CIA's Office of Strategic Research, in which

* For the sake of brevity, I shall henceforth apply the term "Team B" to the group charged with analyzing Soviet strategic objectives, but it must be borne in mind that there were two other B Teams.

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capacity he had participated in the drafting of NIE's. This soft-spoken man with a perpetually worried face, who was to die a mysterious death two years later, rendered my Team B essential services. But he also had an additional task, which was to keep an eye on Team B on behalf of the Agency: in this second capacity he was later to behave in a quite unsavory manner.

Paisley presented me with a list, drawn up by the Agency, of candidates for membership on my team: as far as I recall, it consisted mostly of military officers and defense scientists. From this list I selected only two names: Lieutenant General John W. Vogt, Jr., the recently retired commander of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe, and the missile specialist, Brigadier General Jasper A. Welch, Jr., then still on active service.

For the other members of the team, I preferred to go outside the ranks of technical specialists in the narrow sense of the term. I acted on the premise (which I still believe correct) that Soviet leaders, in contrast to those of the West, neither draw a sharp distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons nor divorce military objectives from political ones. Soviet strategy claims to be and indeed is "grand strategy" which avails itself of a wide range of instrumentalities, military force very much included, to pursue what, in the end, are always political ends. Seen from this perspective, Soviet strategic forces can have no independent mission as determined by the alleged properties of nuclear weapons: in Soviet practice, military missions are driven by political missions, not the other way around. This view is axiomatic in Soviet military writings: "The organic unity of military strategy and policy with the determining role of the latter," in the words of one Soviet general writing in a publication "for official use only," "signifies that military strategy proceeds from policy, is determined by policy, is totally dependent on policy, and accomplishes its specific tasks only within the framework of policy."* Nothing could be more emphatic. Clearly, to understand the task of Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces one has to combine knowledge of Soviet nuclear capabilities with an understanding of the policy in which it is embedded.

With these criteria in mind, I recommended to the DCI nine additional names. They were: Paul Nitze, a one-time Deputy Secretary of Defense and probably the country's leading expert on arms control; Lieutenant General Daniel O. Graham, who had retired earlier that year as Director of the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency, an institution which had consistently taken a more somber view of Soviet capabilities and intentions than the CIA; Professor William van Cleave, a strategic expert from the University of Southern California and one-time member of the SALT I delegation; Foy Kohler, an ex-Ambassador to Moscow; Paul Wolfowitz, a young specialist from the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; Thomas Wolfe of RAND, the author of several works on Soviet military doctrine; and Seymour Weiss, then Ambassador to the Bahamas, recently retired as Director of the Bureau of Political and Military Affairs in the Department of State. These names received approval. The CIA turned down two additional candidates I proposed, one on the grounds that he lacked the necessary security clearances, the other for reasons which it did not care to spell out.

IV

TEAM B held its first meeting on August 25 in quarters assigned to it in Arlington, Virginia. The group promptly agreed on the structure of its report: it would not be an alternative NIE 11-3/8 but a broad and in-depth survey of Soviet strategic policies and programs. We had to work on an exceedingly tight schedule because to be of use to the CIA our report had to be in hand early in November. We agreed to have a preliminary draft ready on October 14: a deadline which proved unrealistic and had to be extended. The report was to consist of three parts. Part One would analyze the methodology used by the CIA in arriving at its estimates: I assumed responsibility for this task. Part Two would have several studies of specific Soviet strategic programs each of which would lay out the nature of the available evidence, the interpretation given this evidence by the CIA, and possible alternative interpretations. Responsibility for this, the longest segment of the report, was distributed among members of the team in accord with their special expertise and personal preferences. Part Three, to be drafted collectively, was to provide a general political-military assessment of the Soviet strategic build-up. (Later on, we added an Appendix with recommendations for improving the NIE process.)

We set to work at once. Paisley and his assistant, Don Suda, supplied us with the intelligence data used by Team A to prepare the current NIE 11-3/8, and such additional information as we requested. Some of this material was so sensitive that the Agency would not let it out of its Langley headquarters and made us read it on the premises. I found the personnel at Langley correct but suspicious and hostile: they seemed to look on our undertaking as yet another assault on their Agency which was still reeling from recent congressional investigations.

Team B met in its full complement a dozen times. At these meetings we heard from the rapporteurs and went over their drafts. Opinion was far from unanimous and as the work progressed some heated exchanges took place. Part Three proved to be especially contentious. It had to be

* Colonel General A. Maiorov in *Voennaia mysl'*, No. 1, January 1975.

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edited over and over again to produce a consensus. For a while it looked as if it would require separate majority and minority statements, but in the end this proved unnecessary.

Paisley, who attended most of our meetings as an observer, seems to have sent Langley alarmed reports that Team B was going beyond its mandate: instead of focusing exclusively on current intentions of the Soviet Union, it was also delving into the reasons why the Agency had in the past misinterpreted these intentions. Not long after our work had gotten under way, I received through him a request from Langley that we not engage in "recriminations" over the CIA's track record.

We decided not to follow this advice and this on grounds that can best be explained in connection with the recent space-shuttle accident. The commission appointed to study the causes of the *Challenger*'s explosion could have confined itself strictly to technical matters, namely, the reasons for the failure of the booster mechanism. If NASA had been in charge of the inquiry, this almost certainly would have been its preference. But NASA's mistakes are not shielded by walls of secrecy as are those of the intelligence community. The commission President Reagan appointed wisely chose to broaden its investigation to include questions of management and decision-making at NASA. It did so not to engage in "recriminations" and find scapegoats but to identify the human failures behind the mechanical ones. The inquiry quickly ascertained serious managerial failings that had caused the catastrophe and recommended changes in personnel and procedures.

Team B felt, on similar grounds, that if the Agency had for years turned out faulty estimates—and, in common with Colby's in-house review, we believed that this had been the case—then it would be of little value to provide merely an alternative estimate. Our group, after all, was an *ad-hoc* body, destined to dissolve in a couple of months. If the CIA reverted to its old ways after the experiment was over and continued to provide flawed estimates, then our whole effort would have been in vain. On this reasoning we felt it necessary to broaden our inquiry to include methodological as well as procedural factors responsible for the faulty estimates so that they could be corrected. Robert Galvin, whom PFIAB had designated to deal with our team, agreed with this reasoning during my only encounter with him early in September.

TEAM B's report remains highly classified. Its classification is so restrictive as to grant access to it only to a very small number of persons among the many who have a professional interest in it. I cannot help feeling that such extreme restrictiveness has less to do with the sensitivity of its material than with the political embarrassment that it has caused the CIA. It should certainly be possible to remove from it references to the classified data and to release publicly a sanitized version.

Be that as it may, it is not possible at this time to reveal the contents of Team B's report, and one can refer to it only in the most general terms. The report charged that in estimating Soviet strategic objectives the CIA had consistently engaged in "mirror-imaging," including insertions of unproven assumptions about Soviet behavior, as well as surreptitious "net assessments." The products of such faulty methodology had served to buttress the apparent belief of the Agency's analysts that the Soviet Union, like the United States, accepted the Mutual Assured Destruction doctrine and built its strategic arsenal for strictly defensive (retaliatory) purposes. Without actually proving the point with reference to U.S. capabilities (which they were enjoined from doing), CIA analysts had conveyed the impression that the Soviet strategic build-up presented no threat to U.S. security.

The political implications of such an assessment happened to favor détente and to place the main burden for its success on the United States, to the extent that Soviet deviations from MAD were ascribed to Russian paranoia that America alone could assuage. Although the Agency's analysts had a great deal of both "hard" (technical) and "soft" (verbal) evidence to demonstrate if not necessarily the validity then at least the feasibility of another interpretation, they chose to ignore it. Their approach indicated neither knowledge of Russia and Communism nor concern with these subjects: they treated the Soviet threat as if it derived from inanimate objects, not from the people who stood behind them.

We, on our part, concluded that the evidence indicated beyond reasonable doubt that the Soviet leadership did not subscribe to MAD but regarded nuclear weapons as tools of war whose proper employment, in offensive as well as defensive modes, promised victory. Soviet nuclear strategy had to be seen in the context of "grand strategy." We also suggested procedures for the preparation of NIE's that would ensure that such faults as we had identified would not recur: they essentially boiled down to the proposition that Soviet nuclear programs be interpreted in Soviet, not American, terms.

DURING the first two months of their work, Team A and Team B did not communicate. Then, toward the end of October, as prearranged, the two teams exchanged drafts. The Team A document which we were given did not differ much from previous NIE 11-3/8's either in premises or in conclusions. It continued to interpret Soviet behavior in American terms: here and there, for purposes of self-protection, the analysts inserted cautionary statements to the effect that perhaps, after all, the USSR did not have exclusively defensive objectives in mind.

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On November 5, at 1 P.M., the two teams confronted each other at Langley to criticize their respective drafts. The news of what was certain to be a lively encounter spread quickly in the intelligence community and admission to the crowded room was said to have been at a premium. In this highly charged atmosphere, Teams A and B took seats on opposite sides of a long table. Howard Stoertz, the head of Team A, chose to sit in the back, entrusting the opening skirmish to his junior staff.

As subsequently reported in the press, the meeting proved a "disaster" for Team A. This outcome was at least in some measure due to the Agency's unwise decision to field against senior outside experts a troop of young analysts, some of them barely out of graduate school, who, even if they had had a better case to make, could not help feeling intimidated by senior government officials, general officers, and university professors. The champion for Team A had barely begun his criticism of Team B's effort, delivered in a condescending tone, when a member of Team B fired a question that reduced him to a state of catatonic immobility: we stared in embarrassment as he sat for what seemed an interminable time with an open mouth, unable to utter a sound. Later Stoertz came to the rescue, but he did not save the Agency and his office from emerging badly mauled.

I do not know what happened within the Agency immediately after this encounter, but I strongly suspect that George Bush intervened to have Team A substantially revise its draft to allow for Team B's criticism. On December 2, the chairmen of both teams presented their findings to PFIAB. Bush attended the meeting but did not speak. I listened with mounting disbelief as Team A advanced an estimate that in all essential points agreed with Team B's position. Then my turn came to deliver a summary of our findings. It was slightly disconcerting to have no reaction from PFIAB, for the few questions which followed were quite perfunctory. At the time I did not know what to make of it but I was later told that the panel's silence was due to its being "thunderstruck" at hearing what many of its members regarded as the first realistic assessment of Soviet strategic intentions to come before it.

Team B met for the last time on the morning of December 21 at Langley. Here, in a large auditorium filled with personnel from various branches of the intelligence community, the A team and the three B teams presented summaries of their findings. George Bush thanked us for our efforts and invited us to lunch: I could not help noticing that no member of my Team B was asked to sit at his table. Bush's position was delicate in the extreme, given the sweeping criticism of his Agency by a group which he had brought into being, and he may not have wished to identify openly with it. He had shown great courage in allowing an external review of the work for which he bore ultimate responsibility. Later on, during congressional hearings, he stated that he strongly favored competitive analyses and would recommend to his successor that he continue them. That day he signed the revised NIE 11-3/8 that was to set a new standard.

Four years later, when I joined the staff of the National Security Council, I had a chance to convince myself that the post-1976 strategic estimates in every respect excelled those which we had read and criticized. And these new estimates, of course, exerted influence on U.S. defense policies, in a limited way under President Carter and in a major one under President Reagan.

V

THERE was one respect in which the experiment in competitive analysis did not succeed and that was in maintaining secrecy. While our work was still in progress, Paisley told me that he had received a call from David Binder of the New York *Times*. He managed to put Binder off for the time being but the secret clearly was out and, given its explosive nature, the press was certain soon to be in hot pursuit. Indeed, on October 20, 1976, the Boston *Globe* carried an article by William Beecher, one of Washington's outstanding defense reporters, with a brief description of Team B's work and a partial list of its members. Other media ignored this news, as they did Beecher's account on December 17, which concluded that "well-placed sources familiar with the story say [Team B's report] is the most devastating indictment ever made of the CIA's Board of Intelligence Estimates." Who had leaked to Binder and Beecher I have never found out. In view of these leaks it occurred to me that it might be advisable for the DCI and PFIAB to release a brief official statement. The powers that be, however, rejected this suggestion: its only effect was to make me a prime suspect in the leaks.

Then the New York *Times* once again demonstrated that in the United States an event is news only when its editors designate it as such. On Sunday, December 26, the *Times* carried on its front page an article by Binder headlined "New CIA Estimate Finds Soviet Seeks Superiority in Arms." This item stimulated an avalanche of public inquiries, and for the next several weeks Team B was constantly in newspaper headlines and on prime-time television.

Binder (who had been a tutee of mine at Harvard in the 1950's) called me a few days prior to the appearance of his article to request an interview. I refused but promised to reconsider when he told me that he had already spoken with George Bush and Richard Lehman, a high CIA official. I called Lehman to verify Binder's account. He confirmed it and encouraged me to talk to Binder as well. I saw Binder subsequently at Washing-

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ton's National Airport and gave him a hurried interview on the Team A-Team B experiment, in broad outline, avoiding particulars.

Binder confused some of the facts, but in its essentials his account was correct. The TV networks at once seized on the news and deluged me with requests for appearances, all of which I turned down. I did, however, give some additional newspaper interviews and published rejoinders in the *Times* and the Washington *Post*.

The story broke at the very time the Ford administration was about to vacate the White House. Although as its whole previous history indicates, the experiment in competitive analysis had nothing whatever to do with this transition, which was as unanticipated as it was irrelevant to its task, journalists and, following them, some legislators hastened to interpret Team B as nothing but a crude political ploy. President-elect Carter had pledged to pursue SALT II negotiations and to cut back the defense budget by $5 billion. If, at the very moment he was assuming office, the intelligence community, acting under alleged external pressure, had altered its estimate to make the Soviet threat appear more menacing, the effect pointed to the motive: to wreck SALT II and compel Carter to increase the defense budget. To make this argument it was necessary to impugn the integrity of Team B and PFIAB.

The initial reaction of the Carter administration—whether out of ignorance or for purposes of obfuscation, it is difficult to tell—was to pretend that Team B had questioned the U.S.'s ability to meet the Soviet military threat. On January 1, 1977 President Carter stated: "We're still by far stronger than they are in most means of measuring military strength." He repeated this assurance in his State of the Union Address later that month. The Secretary of State designate, Cyrus Vance, during his confirmation hearings showed more caution but was equally far off the mark when he voiced confidence that there existed "general parity" between the two superpowers. When pressed, he conceded that he had neither read the Team B report nor received a "thorough briefing" on it.

The outgoing Secretary of State also rushed into the fray. When the experiment was taking place Kissinger seems to have raised no objections to it, possibly because it began during the presidential campaign when he had other things on his mind and ended when he was about to leave office. But he realized that the thesis of the Team B report struck at the very heart of his Soviet policy, which had posited that the nuclear competition should not prevent the two sides from reaching accords on a broad range of issues because they both subscribed to MAD. On January 10, 1977, at a farewell gathering at the National Press Club, he disposed of the whole exercise as nothing more than an effort to "sabotage SALT II." He went on to assure his audience "that no American President would ever allow the Soviet Union to gain superiority over the United States." In the next breath, he added that "the concept of 'supremacy' makes no sense in the nuclear age." Sober heads among his listeners must have wondered why, if supremacy no longer made sense, a President of the United States should work so hard to deny it to the Soviet Union.

It may be added as a postscript that two years later, in a complete about-face, Kissinger told the London *Economist* that he had erred in adhering to the MAD doctrine: nuclear supremacy did, indeed, matter very much. Why he had once held the one view and now its opposite, and what had made him change his mind, he did not explain.

PROMINENT legislators also rushed into the fray. One of them was Senator William Proxmire, who lost no time declaring that Team B's supposed allegations—that the Soviet Union had "already achieved military superiority over the U.S." and was "not only aiming at superiority but preparing for war"—could only be explained by the tendency of the "military establishment . . . to cry wolf at budget time." Even a cursory reading of press reports should have told the Senator that Team B neither made such claims nor worked for the military establishment. Proxmire cited the opinion of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General George Brown, who said that while he believed the Soviet Union did not as yet enjoy military superiority, "the available evidence indicates that the USSR is engaged in a program" to achieve such superiority. This, of course, was exactly the conclusion of Team B: the "available evidence" to which the General referred could only have been its report and the revised NIE. Yet Proxmire praised General Brown for his "courageous statement," although he did nothing but echo Team B which Proxmire himself had accused of "crying wolf."

I clipped and filed the press notices, which were almost uniformly hostile. The editorial writers and columnists of the New York *Times*, the Washington *Post*, and the Washington *Star* concurred that the Team A-Team B exercise had been misbegotten and that its primary purpose had been not to reach an objective judgment but to derail the "orderly process of intelligence evaluation" for purely political ends. The British press, taking its cue from the U.S., fell into step. So did *Red Star*, the organ of the Soviet military, and *Pravda*, which cited Western opinions to argue that Team B was yet another effort of American "hawks" to scuttle détente and raise defense expenditures. Brezhnev professed to be bored by the whole affair. "Frankly speaking," he declared in mid-January, "this noisy and idle talk has become quite tiresome. The allegations that the Soviet Union is going beyond what is sufficient for its defense, that it is striving for superiority in armaments with the aim of delivering a first strike are absurd and totally unfounded." For good

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measure Brezhnev added that his country "will never take the path of aggression, and will never raise a sword against other nations." This was going a bit far perhaps, but at least Brezhnev showed that unlike the incumbent U.S. President and his Secretary of State, much of Congress, and most of the Western media, he at least knew what Team B was about: not Soviet capabilities but Soviet intentions.

Among the self-styled "experts" on Team B who proliferated at this time, the most voluble was a certain Arthur Macy Cox. Cox had long ago worked for the CIA, which lent him an air of authority in matters concerning intelligence. By the time the Team B story broke, he was among the most extreme advocates of détente: a reviewer of a book Cox published in 1976 said that the author believed the "arms race will end when the United States decides to end it." Cox had never seen the Team B report even from a distance, but this did not inhibit him from declaring categorically in the *New York Review of Books* that "all its conclusions are either wrong, or distorted, or based on misinterpretation of the facts."

And finally, there was the scientific community. Team B challenged its most cherished political convictions as well as its political interests. If Team B's conclusions became U.S. policy, then the hold which the scientists of the "deterrence-through-agreement" school had had on U.S. strategic planning and weapons programs for twenty years would be broken. The scientists reacted, therefore, with understandable anger. I did not follow their pronouncements on the subject closely, but I see no reason to think that the reaction of two prominent scientists from Cambridge, Massachusetts in an interview with the *Harvard Crimson* was an isolated example. Bernard Feld, an MIT physicist, dismissed Team B's findings on the grounds that the group consisted of "well-known spokesmen for the American Right." The Harvard chemist, George Kistiakowsky, labeled the undertaking "one of those red-herring stories." Neither gentleman was familiar with the contents of Team B's report, and neither responded to its findings as reported in the press. Their reaction was strictly *ad hominem*, a kind of pseudo-argument that always betrays the absence of ideas.

THE shower of confused and ignorant abuse was, of course, unpleasant. But it was even more disturbing. It revealed that the intellectual elite of the United States, which had arrogated to itself the right to determine U.S. defense strategy, was unable, intellectually as well as psychologically, to cope with alternative points of view.

Having spent my entire adult life in scholarship, I took it for granted that a statement of fact, provided it is not meaningless, can only be either correct or false—it cannot be "good" or "bad," "moral" or "immoral." He who makes a factual statement can be faulted on no other grounds than wrong perception of the facts or faulty inference from them. His motives in making it are as irrelevant to its veracity as are its implications. This much seems obvious. No one in his right mind would accuse a physician who diagnoses a patient as suffering from terminal illness of harboring ill will toward the patient and his family: at most one would question his judgment and seek another opinion. But in politics, as I was to learn in the winter of 1976-77, other rules prevail. Here the first, and often the last, question asked is not: is the proposition true?, but: why has it been made and what are its practical consequences?

In all the discussions of Team B the one question that mattered the most was never raised: was the Soviet Union really seeking nuclear superiority? So preoccupied were the politicians, journalists, and left-wing intellectuals with what they presumed to have been the motives of Team B and the potential political fallout from its findings that they never bothered to inquire whether its principal conclusion was correct. In any event, in my extensive collection of newspaper clippings there is not one which addresses itself to this central issue. In this respect, the writers for the New York *Times*, Washingon *Post*, London *Sunday Times*, *Red Star*, and *Pravda* differed only in their journalistic manners, not in the quality of their thinking.

It was also disconcerting to learn that those who had claimed the final say on nuclear strategy could not distinguish the discrete elements that go into security estimates. Soviet nuclear capabilities and intentions were hopelessly mixed up with each other and with the separate question of the overall military balance. The proposition that "the Soviet Union strives for nuclear superiority" was confounded with the question of whether the Soviet Union intended imminently to attack the United States. In the end, the reaction boiled itself down to the juvenile boast, "I am stronger than you," supplemented with the MAD qualifier, "But even if I am not, it does not matter because there can be no fighting." It is not difficult to imagine with what amusement Soviet professional strategists must have followed this particular "national debate."

Regrettably, the same confusion was to attend subsequent U.S. public discussions of arms control, nuclear programs, and strategic defenses.

VI

ON JANUARY 7 and 8, 1977, the press announced that no fewer than three congressional committees were undertaking to investigate the Team A-Team B affair. The most important of these was the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence whose Subcommittee on Collection, Production, and Quality of Intelligence,

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chaired by Adlai Stevenson, was to determine whether any improper pressure had been brought to bear on the Agency to have it "slant" its estimate. It gives some idea of the spirit in which these inquiries were carried out that neither I nor any other member of Team B was invited to testify before these committees. Their source of information was the CIA, which thus enjoyed the enviable position of appearing as both plaintiff and sole witness.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a closed hearing on January 18, at which George Bush testified. Although the Washington *Post* headlined its report "'Worst-Case' Intelligence Hit," every Senator who spoke to its correspondent after the hearing praised the Team A-Team B experiment. Hubert Humphrey, Clifford Case, and Jacob Javits commended the Agency for organizing the competition and incorporating Team B's findings into its estimate. Case declared that "political considerations" had not altered the official estimates. Humphrey expressed the opinion that the U.S. still enjoyed a nuclear "edge," but that it was "questionable whether we can maintain that edge" into the 1980's. Charles Percy thought that to alert the Russians to American concerns, the new findings should be made public, but he failed to convince Bush.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held "hearings," a format which permits diverse opinions to be heard and enables the Senators to take part in the inquiry. The Senate Intelligence Committee, however, chose a different and much less satisfactory route of preparing a "report." This procedure requires no witnesses to be called. It is a research effort in which busy Senators do not participate personally but rely on their staffs: at best the Senators read the finished product before affixing their signatures to it and contribute a personal statement. In such an exercise, the quality of the staff is critical. The Intelligence Committee assigned the task of drafting its report on Team A-Team B to two staff members who had strong ideological and personal biases against Team B and everything it stood for. The staff director of the Committee, William G. Miller, had drafted the Cooper-Church Amendment that cut off aid to Vietnam and, as Senator Cooper's assistant, had actively fought the ballistic-missile defense program (ABM). It was presumably his responsibility to select the person in charge of the Team A-Team B report. His choice fell on Harold Ford, a recently retired employee of the CIA (which he subsequently rejoined). By virtue of his entire background, Ford could hardly have been expected to sit in impartial judgment on a case so painful to his colleagues in the Agency. The two men worked assiduously and quietly, with the assistance of the CIA. So it happened that the Team A-Team B inquiry was conducted by active and retired CIA personnel—that is, essentially by Team A. Ford briefly interviewed some members of Team B, but he relied mainly on testimony by Paisley who provided a highly partisan account.

I FIRST learned of these developments in July 1977 when I received a letter from General Graham in which he wrote that he had heard through the "grapevine" that the Intelligence Committee had drafted, in utter secrecy, a biased and denigrating report on Team B. I immediately wrote Senator Stevenson requesting permission to see this document. I argued that if the intelligence community had been given the opportunity to present its side, then Team B should at least be allowed to read and comment on the Committee's product. Senator Stevenson must have been unaware of what Messrs. Miller and Ford had been doing on his Subcommittee's behalf, for he immediately agreed that Nitze, Graham, and myself should be given access to the classified report.

The document I saw was an indictment of Team B, filled with slanderous accusations. As I now learned, it had been completed as early as May but had not yet received the approval of the Committee, which gave us an opportunity to correct its misstatements and slurs. Its most offensive feature was its questioning of the personal integrity of PFIAB and Team B, whose members stood accused of conniving to carry out, in the guise of intelligence estimating, a political operation. It charged Team B with exceeding its original mandate; of ignoring the "raw data" supplied to it by the Agency; of conspiring with PFIAB in the selection of personnel as well as the formulation of conclusions; of reaching conclusions before it had seen the evidence; and of leaking to the press. The principal source of these accusations was Paisley.* These charges notwithstanding, the report found many of the criticisms which Team B had made, and many of its recommendations, to be sound and worthwhile. It did not explain how a group of such low integrity, using such flawed procedures, could produce anything of value, but this contradiction could not be avoided since the authors of the report, while condemning Team B, had to explain why the Agency had allowed itself to be so strongly influenced by it.

Appended to the report was a personal statement by Senator Gary Hart which summarized this whole indictment. "The [Intelligence] Com-

* Except for some minor matters connected with Team B finances, this was my last contact with Paisley. On October 1, 1978, his badly decomposed body was found floating in Chesapeake Bay. There was a bullet wound in his head and diver's belts were wound around his waist. The circumstances of his death have not been cleared up to this day (the CIA conducted an investigation but did not release its findings). The most likely verdict is suicide but murder cannot be precluded. Some journalists have claimed that at the time of his disappearance Paisley had materials on Team B on his sailboat. See the New York *Times Magazine*, January 7, 1979.

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mittee report and the information from other sources," Hart wrote, "has convinced me that 'competitive analysis' and use of selected outside experts was little more than a camouflage for a political effort to force the National Intelligence Estimates to take a more bleak view of the Soviet strategic threat." Whether he realized it or not (for such senatorial statements are usually prepared by staff), Senator Hart was accusing the fourteen members of PFIAB and the ten members of Team B of placing their personal political objectives ahead of the nation's interest.

I submitted to Senator Stevenson a point-by-point rebuttal. (So did, separately, Nitze and Graham.) I asserted that we could not have "exceeded our mandate" since no responsible person in the Agency had restricted the scope of our inquiry. As for our alleged disregard of the "raw data," I observed that the Committee could arrive at such a conclusion only by ignoring Part Two of our report, which almost entirely relied on them. I stated that prior to joining Team B, I had not met a single member of PFIAB (I later learned that PFIAB had been equally ignorant of my existence) and hence that no "collusion" could have taken place even if it had been on anyone's mind. I had talked only once to Robert Galvin, and then in Paisley's presence. I, not PFIAB, had personally selected all the members of Team B, and my choices had the approval of the Director of Central Intelligence who had picked me to be chairman. The charge that Team B had reached its conclusions before analyzing the CIA material could be disproven with reference to its work schedule, which I provided. The Committee report furnished no evidence to substantiate its charge that members of Team B had had unauthorized communication with the media. As for Senator Hart's accusations, I found them contemptible slander: the best that could be said in his favor was that he did not realize what he was saying when he accused ex-Secretaries of the Treasury and the Army, an ex-Deputy Secretary of Defense, a one-time Chief of Naval Operations, and presidents of major corporations of deliberately misleading their government on a matter of the greatest importance to national security.

THESE rejoinders fortunately did attract the attention of the Committee, because it held up approval until the report could be revised to allow for our corrections. The staffs of Senators Malcolm Wallop and Daniel Patrick Moynihan greatly contributed to this editorial work. The Committee finally approved the revised text on February 16, 1978. I have not seen the full, classified text but the public version showed considerable improvement.* The verdict remained negative. While it commended Team B for having made "some valid criticisms" and "some useful recommendations," the Committee thought that the experiment proved less valuable than it might have been because Team B was too one-sided in its composition and had exceeded its mandate. Press leaks had further reduced its value. Still—in the public version, at any rate—the personal attacks on members of PFIAB and Team B were omitted. The Committee report also accepted one of the basic premises of Team B, that "strategic" should be interpreted "in the context of Soviet interests and policies."

Appended to the Committee's public report, alongside Senator Hart's statement, were "separate views" by Senators Moynihan and Wallop which appraised positively the work of Team B and refuted some of the criticisms by the Committee's majority. Moynihan disposed of the complaint that the undertaking had been carried out in an "adversarial" manner because of the "one-sided" composition of Team B:

> Given the B Team's purpose, it is hardly surprising that its members' view reflected "only one segment of the spectrum of opinion." Inasmuch as the main purpose of the experiment was to determine why previous estimates had produced such misleading pictures of Soviet strategic developments, it was reasonable to pick team members whose views of Soviet strategy differed from those of the official estimators, just as a similar experiment, had one been conducted in 1962, might have called for a "B Team" composed of strategic analysts who had been skeptical of the "missile gap."

Senator Wallop criticized the preoccupation of the Committee's report with procedures. The Intelligence Committee, in common with the media, had refused to address itself to the central issue, namely, the soundness of Team B's findings, preferring to concentrate on the procedures it had used. This was a strange self-imposed limitation for a group charged with overseeing the quality of intelligence. Conceding that the revised report improved on the original, Wallop nevertheless thought it "still fundamentally flawed, because,

> in the words of the [Committee] report, it "makes no attempt to judge which group's estimates concerning the USSR are correct." Therefore the report's "findings and recommendations for improving the quality of future NIE's on Soviet capabilities and objectives are primarily directed at procedural issues." But it is logically impossible to determine the *quality* of opposing arguments without reference to the *substance* of those arguments. After all, the *quality* of an estimate depends above all upon its *accuracy*. In order to make judgments concerning quality, never mind suggesting improvements, one must judge where the truth lies against which the estimate's accuracy is to be measured.

* *The National Intelligence Estimates—A-B Team Episode Concerning Soviet Strategic Capability and Objectives*, released by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on February 16, 1978.

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By the time this report was released, Team B had faded from memory, and it attracted little attention. The original draft, however, even though eventually discarded, managed to inflict serious harm on the intelligence process. In May 1977, when Harold Ford completed his draft, PFIAB, which it cast as the chief culprit, was peremptorily abolished. Leo Cherne, its chairman, received, along with his letter of dismissal, an application for unemployment insurance. The timing may have been coincidental; but it is more likely that the new DCI, Admiral Stansfield Turner, used the initial draft of the report to rid himself of the group charged with overseeing his Agency.*

VII

THE subject which remains to be discussed is Team B's influence on the attitudes of the U.S. government and public opinion toward the Soviet nuclear threat. Such matters are inherently difficult to appraise. Team B did not so much come up with fresh revelations as articulate and justify doubts about Soviet intentions which had been gaining ground among political and military experts for some time. Such impact as it exerted resulted from the fact that it stated what many were thinking but did not dare to say. This is confirmed by the speed with which the views of Team B, once the spell of conformity had been broken, spread in and out of government. Proponents of MAD found themselves for the first time confronted with an articulate and well-informed opposition: their monopoly on opinion fell apart. Barely a year after the event, in his appendix to the Intelligence Committee's report, Senator Moynihan wrote that Team B's "notion that the Soviets intend to surpass the United States in strategic arms and are in the process of doing so, has gone from hearsay to respectability, if not orthodoxy." Ideas spread this rapidly only when they have already germinated in many minds.

Within the government, as I have noted, the views advanced by Team B initially affected thinking through the revised 1977 NIE and its successors. In the years that followed, the Agency's analysts ceased to "mirror-image": this fact alone gives the lie to the charge that Team B had "pressured" the Agency to alter its 1977 estimate. In fact, miniature Team B's had existed all along inside the intelligence community, the CIA included, but they were silenced by the official consensus and confined to cautionary remarks and dissenting footnotes. Team B gave these minority views such strong and persuasive support that they emerged on top. Team B through its recommendations also had a lasting effect on the manner in which estimates were henceforth prepared. According to Herbert Meyer, who recently retired from the National Intelligence Council of the CIA, "We have put a major emphasis on competitive analysis. The estimates now routinely include dissenting opinion."†

The responsibilities of office quickly cured the Carter administration of its glib and uninformed opinions of Team B. On assuming his duties, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's National Security Adviser, commissioned a number of studies on the Soviet strategic threat and potential U.S. responses. This work, carried out quietly to avoid the kind of public controversy that had followed the A-B Team experiment, promptly led to the conclusion that Team B had been correct in its assessments: the Soviet Union was indeed developing a first-strike capability. In 1980, probably in an effort to refute candidate Ronald Reagan's criticism of their administration's nuclear policy, Carter's officials began to leak these findings to the press. Once again, the redoubtable William Beecher of the Boston *Globe* broke the news. On July 27, 1980, he published an article headlined "U.S. Reshaping N-Strategy Against the Soviets," in which he reported that a new statement was being drafted in the National Security Council on U.S. nuclear strategy. It would reject Mutual Assured Destruction and the targeting doctrine based on it, which called for the retaliatory strike to concentrate on civilian targets, in favor of one directed principally at political and military targets. The purpose of the new strategy was to ensure that even if attacked in a first strike, the U.S. would have the ability to wage a protracted war. The new strategic doctrine, formulated in the summer of 1980 in a Presidential Directive (PD 59), marked the beginning of a radical shift in U.S. strategic policy.

No less important were parallel shifts in public opinion. Here a major contribution was made by the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), a bipartisan body of prominent public figures founded in Washington in the summer of 1976. (To prevent exploitation of its findings for campaign purposes, the founders of CPD postponed formal announcement until after the presidential election of that year.) Paul Nitze, a member of Team B, was one of the Committee's founders. Its other leaders —among them, Eugene V. Rostow, Dean Rusk, Lane Kirkland, Max Kampelman, Richard Allen, David Packard, and Henry H. Fowler—felt appre-

* President Reagan reinstituted PFIAB shortly after assuming office.

† *Insight*, June 23, 1986, p. 15. People well informed about the NIE process say that the current "competitive analyses" are in-house undertakings, much more limited in scope than Team B had been. Recently the CIA has let the press know that it once again takes a "less grim" view of Soviet military preparations than the Pentagon, and maintains its "independence" from the Reagan administration's "more conservative direction." As an illustration of "past political pressures," its spokesmen referred to the A-Team/B-Team experiment. This may be a sign of the changing political climate. See Michael R. Gordon in the New York *Times*, July 16, 1986.

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hensive about the strategic balance and dedicated themselves to alerting the public to the decline in U.S. military capabilities.

Early in 1977 I was invited to join CPD's Executive Committee and wrote two programmatic statements for it, one on Soviet global strategy ("What Is the Soviet Union Up To?"), the other on Soviet arms-control policies ("Why the Soviet Union Wants SALT II").* Under the skilled direction of Charles Tyroler, CPD conducted press conferences, commissioned opinion polls, and released facts and figures on the strategic balance. In the propitious atmosphere created by the Team B controversy, public interest was keen. CPD had much influence on public perceptions of the Soviet threat, with the result that voters soon took a more favorable view of increased defense expenditures and a more critical one of SALT II, which CPD selected as its particular target. My article, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks it Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War," published in the July 1977 issue of COMMENTARY, explained how and why politicized scientists and uncritical devotees of arms control had misconstrued the Soviet strategic threat.

By the time President Reagan took office, the views of Team B and CPD were unmistakably in the ascendant. A remarkable shift in public opinion had taken place, which helped the new administration to proceed with its ambitious program of defense procurements. Several commentators, seeking to define President Reagan's views on foreign and defense policies, found their source in Team B.† It did not escape them, either, that nearly thirty of the officials whom Reagan—himself a member of CPD—chose for high posts in the first weeks of his administration belonged to the Committee on the Present Danger, an organization that saw eye-to-eye with Team B. President Reagan's distaste for arms control as a political tool, his insistence on building up first offensive nuclear forces and then anti-nuclear defenses, all rested on the premise that the USSR held a different view of the utility of nuclear weapons from the United States, regarding them as guarantors not of peace but of victory. From this premise it followed that if the U.S. deterrent were to prove effective it had to be constructed in terms that were credible to the Soviet General Staff, even if they held no appeal for American civilian strategists.

Thus the United States government at last came to terms with the military implications of a weapon that it was the first to develop and employ but for a long time refused to acknowledge as a reality in the international balance of power. The opponents of this realistic view have had to retreat. They have regrouped and returned to the fray in President Reagan's second term, bringing to bear powerful pressures from such diverse sources as the Department of State, much of Congress, and the European allies. President Reagan is once again told that national security is best assured not by the construction of offensive and defensive weapons but by accords with the Soviet Union. The battle is far from won. But at least the arms-control lobby no longer has a monopoly on opinion: it obstructs but it does not dictate U.S. defense policies.

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* These documents, along with others released by the Committee, are reproduced in Charles Tyroler II, ed., *Alerting America* (Committee on the Present Danger, 1984), pp. 10-15 and 166-69.

† See, for example, Hedrick Smith in the New York *Times*, May 25, 1980 and Godfrey Hodgson in the *New Statesman*, September 5, 1980. Hodgson wrote that "Reagan's foreign policy is rooted in the world view of Team B." Jim Klurfield concluded, in what is one of the best journalistic accounts of Team B (*Newsday*, June 14-15, 1981), that "on November 4, 1980, Team B, in essence, became Team A."

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